

## Message Text

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11

ACTION ARA-10

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 211740Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2219

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TEGUCIGALPA 0329

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, HO

SUBJECT: CONSULTATIONS FOR ADVISORY COUNCIL OUTLINED IN STATE  
OF UNION ADDRESS

REF: (A) TEGUCIGALPA 0010 (DTG 022033Z JAN. 76),

(B) TEGUCIGALPA 0068 (DTG 071745Z JAN. 76)

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN KEEPING WITH THE STATED INTENTIONS IN HIS  
DECEMBER 31, 1975 STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS, CHIEF OF STATE  
MELGAR HAS UNDERTAKEN A SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH VARIOUS SECTORS  
OF SOCIETY DESIGNED TO BRING ABOUT THE FORMATION OF AN ADVISORY  
COUNCIL CONCERNING A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALITY AND OTHER  
IMPORTANT MATTERS FACING THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT. TO DATE,  
HE HAS MET WITH LEADERS OF THE CHURCH, THE PROFESSIONALS'  
COUNCIL, THE NATIONAL PARTY, AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT. HE IS  
CURRENTLY SHCEDUHCQ TOCGET WITH THE LAIBERAL PARTY. END  
SUMMARY.

#1. IN FULFFILLMENTOF THE PLEDGE CONTAINED INHIS DECEMBER 31,  
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1975 STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS, CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR INITI-

ATED A SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH VARIOUS SECTORS OF SOCIETY WHICH MAY LEAD TO THE FORMATION OF AN ADVISORY COUNCIL WHICH WILL GIVE ADVICE TO THE GOVERNMENT ON A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALITY AND OTHER IMPORTANT QUESTIONS FACING THE NATION. HIS FIRST MEETING WAS ON JANUARY 14 WITH CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADERS, HEADED BY ARCHBISHOP HECTOR ENRIQUE SANTOS. MONSIGNOR SANTOS EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION TO THE CHIEF OF STATE FOR THE FACT THAT THE CHURCH WAS THE FIRST INSTITUTION SELECTED TO MEET WITH HIM. HE FURTHER DESCRIBED THE CHURCH'S WILLINGNESS TO WORK WITH THE GOVERNMENT WHEN IT INVOLVES PROPOSALS OF PEACE, HARMONY AND UNITY BECAUSE THESE ARE THE BASIS OF PROGRESS FOR THE COUNTRY. HE ALSO THANKED THE CHIEF OF STATE FOR HIS INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ADVISORY COUNCIL, BUT STATED HE WOULD BE UNABLE TO DO SO BECAUSE OF OTHER COMMITMENTS ALREADY UNDERTAKEN.

2. MELGAR'S SECOND MEETING WAS WITH THE HONDURAN PROFESSIONALS' COUNCIL. THE PROFESSIONALS' COUNCIL SPOKESMEN SAID THAT THEY WERE SATISFIED BY THE DISCUSSION WITH MELGAR AND WOULD TAKE THE POINTS DISCUSSED INTO ACCOUNT WHEN THE ADVISORY COUNCIL IS ACTUALLY FORMED. THEY POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THE PROFESSIONALS' COUNCIL DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE ADVISORY COUNCIL SHOULD BE LIMITED TO WRITING A NEW ELECTION LAW, BUT RATHER SHOULD BE INDEPENDENT AND HAVE THE RIGHT TO INITIATE LAWS IN ORDER TO ASSIST IN SOLVING THE PROBLEMS FACING HONDURAS.

3. AFTER MELGAR'S MEETING WITH THE NATIONALIST PARTY ON JANUARY 17, ITS LEADER, RECARDO ZUNIGA, STATED THAT IN THE MEETING WITH THE CHIEF OF STATE THEY DEMANDED A PROMPT RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALITY BECAUSE IT IS THE MOST URGENT BUSINESS FACING THE COUNTRY. HE ALSO SAID THAT PARTICIPATION IN THE ADVISORY COUNCIL SHOULD BE DETERMINED ON THE BASIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE 1971 ELECTION BECAUSE THIS WOULD BE THE ONLY WAY TO ASSURE A TRULY REPRESENTATIVE BODY. HE FURTHER OBSERVED THAT THE PARTY HAD MADE NO RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO HOW THE COUNCIL SHOULD FUNCTION BECAUSE THIS WAS UP TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. THE PARTY ALSO DECLINED TO PRESENT AN OUTLINE FOR A NEW ELECTORAL LAW.

4. MELGAR LATER MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MENT INCLUDING VICTOR ARTILES, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE GENERAL WORKERS CENTRAL (CTH); CELEO GONZALEZ, PRESIDENT OF THE NORTH COAST LABOR FEDERATION (FESITRANH); AND GUSTAVO ZELAYA, PRESIDENT OF THE TEGUCIGALPA LABOR FEDERATION (FECESITLIH). GONZALEZ SAID THAT THE TALKS HAD BEEN MOST USEFUL BECAUSE THERE HAD BEEN AN INTERCHANGE OF IDEAS AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT TO THE CHIEF OF STATE SOME OF THE CONCERNS OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT. HE FURTHER SAID THAT HE AGREED WITH THE STATE-

MENT BY NATIONAL PARTY LEADER ZUNIGA REGARDING PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION BECAUSE A UNITED UNION MOVEMENT COMBINED WITH A UNITED CAMPESINO MOVEMENT WOULD HAVE THE LARGEST REPRESENTATION. HE REMARKED THAT HIS PERSONAL PARTICIPATION IN THE ADVISORY COUNCIL WOULD BE UP TO THE ORGANIZATION HE REPRESENTS. HE STATED THAT EACH SECTOR SHOULD SELECT ITS OWN REPRESENTATIVES AND THAT THOSE REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD SERVE AT THE PLEASURE OF THOSE THEY REPRESENT. ZELAYA AGREED THAT THE MEETING HAD BEEN PRODUCTIVE AND SAID THAT IT HAD REMOVED ANY DOUBTS THE LABOR MOVEMENT HAD REGARDING PARTICIPATION IN THE ADVISORY COUNCIL. ZELAYA ALSO SAID THAT THE LABOR MOVEMENT IS UNITED ON THE QUESTION OF THE FORMATION OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL AND THAT THIS WAS DEMONSTRATED IN THE CONVERSATION WITH MELGAR. ARTILES AGREED WITH GONZALEZ AND ZELAYA AND ADDED THAT THEY HAD EMPHASIZED TO MELGAR THE NEED TO ASSURE LABOR'S PARTICIPATION IN THE POLICY-MAKING BODIES OF THE GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT MELGAR HAD SHOWN THAT HE WANTS TO GAIN AND KEEP THE CONFIDENCE OF THE LABOR LEADERS.

5. THE LIBERAL PARTY IS SHCEDULED TO MEET WITH MELGAR ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 22.

6. COMMENT: IN GENERAL, ALL SECTORS SO FAR CONSULTED BELIEVE THAT THEY SHOULD SELECT THEIR REPRESENTATIVES TO THE COUNCIL RATHER THAN HAVE THE GOVERNMENT CHOOSE THEM. WHILE THE VARIOUS GROUPS BELIEVE THAT THE COUNCIL WILL BE A MECHANISM FOR PRESENTING THEIR VIEWS TO THE GOVERNMENT, THEY CLEARLY DO NOT WANT TO MAKE IT APPEAR THAT THEY ARE BEING MANIPULATED BY THE GOVERNMENT. AS MENTIONED BY PRESIDENTIAL ADVCSER BATRES (REFTEL B), THE ADVISORY COUNCIL HAD BEEN ENVISIONED AS A "LITTLE CONGRESS" THAT WOULD HAVE SOME OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF A LEGISLATIVE BODY AND, AS SUCH, WOULD BE ABLE TO ADVISE THE GOVERNMENT ON DEVELOPING THE ELECTORAL LAW AND OFFERING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ADVICE ON PROPOSED GOVERNMENTAL ACTION. THE COUNCIL IS IN ITS INITIAL PHASE OF ORGANIZATION AND IT IS PROBABLE THAT IT WILL NOT BE ESTABLISHED UNTIL LATE FEBRUARY OR EARLY MARCH.  
SANCHEZ

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